

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, 24th, 25th and 26th MARCH 1978 AT CONWAY HALL, LONDON WC 1.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Total collections	£164.90 $\frac{1}{2}$
Lit Sales	47.08
Bound Vols of SS	84.00
Canteen Surplus	50.92

ATTENDANCE

Friday morning	All 16 Branches represented, 36 Delegates sitting.
Friday afternoon	" " " 38 " "
Saturday afternoon	" " " 36 " "
Sunday Morning	Only 15 " 34 " "
	(Bolton Branch not represented)
Sunday Afternoon	All 16 Branches represented, 36 Delegates sitting.

Friday

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AT 10.50am.

Chair Nominations were received for Cdes R.Ambridge (Swansea Br), D.Davies (Westminster Br), Donnelly (Glasgow Br) and A.George (Westminster Br). On the delegates' vote Cde George was elected to Chair and Cde Davies to Vice-Chair.

Tellers It was Agreed that Standing Orders Cttee act as Tellers.

REPORT OF STANDING ORDERS CTTEE

The Cttee reported that SW London Br delegates had had credential slips made out but they had gone astray in the post. It was Agreed that the delegates be allowed to sit.

Forms C had been received late from Oxford, Edinburgh, Glasgow and W.Yorks Br. Oxford Br reported that they had been without auditors and a resn that their delegates be permitted to sit was Carried 26-0. Edinburgh Br reported difficulties in getting a quorum and a meeting place, and a resn that their delegates be permitted to sit was Carried 28-0. Glasgow Br reported that their auditor had been off sick, and a resn that their delegates be permitted to sit was Carried 20-0. W.Yorks Br reported that their Form C had been sent in time and a duplicate sent, and a resn that their delegates be permitted to sit was Carried 19-0.

AMENDMENTS TO RULE

Rule 2 Mid Herts Br: "Delete all after 'funds' in the first sentence."
Lost 18-22.

Amendment (Hampstead Br): "Delete all after 'funds' at the end of the first sentence."
Lost 8-32.

Westminster Br and Camden Br: "Delete '25p' and insert '50p'."
Carried 28-13.

Amendment (Swansea and Westminster Brs): "Delete '50p' and insert '£1'."
Lost 18-23.

Rule 3 Mid Herts Br: "Add 'A member resident abroad must be a member of Central Branch'."
Lost 19-21.

Rule 9 Westm. Br: "Delete '20p' and insert '40p'."
Carried 31-8.

Rule 12 Bolton Br: "Delete the sentence 'Nominations shall be made by the Branches' and replace by 'A call shall be made for nominations and those nominations shall be made by at least two members'."
Lost 5-35.

Swansea Br: "Add at the end 'Members shall not serve on the EC for more than three successive years, after which such members shall be ineligible to serve on the EC during the two following years'." (If carried this addendum to operate as from January 1979).
Lost 5-35.

Rule 13 Haringey Br: "Delete in line 5 all after 'holidays' and substitute '(maximum two weeks)', sickness or domestic reasons. Any member of the EC absent in excess of six meetings from the thirteen consecutive meetings shall lapse from the EC unless his/her absence is due to Party business and of duration previously approved by resolution of the EC. Members sitting for two consecutive years shall have their record carried forward."
Lost 4-13.

Rule 17 Haringey Br: "Insert after the words 'sub-committees' the words 'and ad-hoc committees'."
Lost 6-33.

Addendum (WESTMINSTER BR): "After 'ad hoc committees' the Rule to read 'Names shall be called for unless the matter is urgent in which case the EC may appoint members to the ad-hoc committees'."
Lost 10-28

Addendum (HAMPSTEAD BR): "After 'and ad hoc committees' the rule to read 'Names shall be called for unless the nature of an ad-hoc committee's function was such that the immediate appointment of its members by the EC was necessary'."
Lost 8-29.

GLASGOW BR: "That Rule 17 be amended to read 'The EC shall publish and control the Party literature, establish a literature agency from which all Branches shall be supplied, appoint all Party representatives in debates, establish and maintain communications with the Socialist Parties abroad and otherwise generally supervise the work of the Party, and to this end may appoint sub-committees with the

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exception of the Socialist Standard Production Committee, which shall be elected annually by vote of the Party from the nominations by the branches. Names shall be called for."

Lost 13-28.

Amendment (BOLTON BR): "On the last line delete 'the branches' and replace with 'at least two members'."

Lost 4-37.

A Glasgow delegate argued that the Party voted for the auditors, the EC, the Central Organiser, etc. The SSPC was perhaps the most important committee in the Party, so the Party should decide.

Rule 17 OXFORD BR: "Delete the words 'supervise the work of the Party' and replace with 'administer the work of the Party in accordance with Party polls, Party rules & Conference decisions'."

Carried 27-15.

An Oxford delegate argued that there had been recent examples of the Rule having been widened, and there was need of clarification.

Rule 19 LEWISHAM BR: "to add to the last sentence 'under supervision of the E.C. in accordance with Rule 15'."

Lost 15-25.

Rule 31 MID HERTS BR: "Insert 'members' before 'Branch' in line 2."

Lost 18-22.

MID HERTS BR: "Add 'Any member making a charge against a member of another branch being dissatisfied with findings of the charged member's branch, must obtain the support of his own branch before bringing the matter to the notice of the Executive Committee'."

Lost 16-24.

Rule 33 MID HERTS BR: "Delete 'or member' from line 1 and also insert 'branch' after 'accused' in lines 8 and 10."

(Fell)

Rule 24 SOUTHERN BR: "That the Chairman at all meetings should ensure that all members should conduct themselves in a manner which is best suited to enhance the prestige of the Party and further the success of propaganda."

Lost 5-57.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES

BOLTON BR No members joined or left. SS sales had recently declined. Two regular visitors, and a programme of talks.

CAMDEN BR Approx 20 members. 43 meetings had been held at Tower Hill, including the winter. There were proposals to run meetings at Lincoln's Inn Fields on Wednesdays and indoor meetings to launch Questions of the Day. Lectures were to be given at alternate Branch meetings.

EDINBURGH BR The Branch was in a period of decline and was handicapped by not being able to return unsold SS to HQ. Support was needed from the Party.

GLASGOW BR Owing to the winter weather the Branch was 6 dozen copies down on last year's SS sales, but good efforts by younger members selling in pubs had kept sales reasonable. An indoor meeting in Feb had not been very well attended. A lecture tour by Cde H. Young had resulted in time on TV and radio and broken new ground by getting into the university.

HAMPSTEAD BR 10 members. 6 Br lectures well attended and 2 outdoor meetings during GLC elections. Canvassing had begun. A large meeting had been planned, but advertising was handicapped by restrictions from the hall owners. Two Br meeting rooms had been lost at the end of the year because of threats to the National Front, who also met there. The owners had refused permission for further meetings.

HARINGEY BR Br membership was the same. There had been some difficulties in arranging a meeting place. Some propaganda meetings had been organised but were poorly attended.

LEWISHAM BR Not much activity. Public meetings had been tried but were poorly attended.

MID HERTS BR 13 members, but only 6 active. (2 members were active in their place of study). 6 dozen SS were sold and the SS guarantee fund was supported.

OXFORD BR A few indoor meetings but the main activity was selling the SS.

REDBRIDGE BR Good propaganda year. A number of indoor lectures and lit sold. 8 Ilford outdoor meetings. SS sold regularly at Ilford Station. 2 new members.

SOUTHERN BR Br meeting had been well-attended for the last 3 years. Membership had increased to 13. Like Edinburgh, the Br was reluctant to over-order the SS since they could not now be returned to HQ. Discussion group outside the town. Propaganda meetings had been advertised in shop windows: limited success, but limited cost.

SW LONDON PR Br members served on a large number of cttees, and provided speakers, chairman and lit sellers for meetings. Meetings were held at Earls Court with good lit sales.

SWANSEA BR Smallest Branch, in a dead town. A new group at Cardiff had not worked out, and meetings at Pontypridd had not been very successful. Regular Br mtgs now in a pub.

W. LONDON BR Over half members were outside London. Average attendance was 7 or 8. Propaganda meetings were held at the Br once per month, advertised in the local press and newsagents, but with not much response. 2 meetings in Hammersmith Town Hall, poorly attended.

WESTMINSTER BR Br fairly active, with members travelling to other places. Several dozen SS were sold per month.

CENTRAL BR Meetings were held in Mid-Surrey, well attended. There had been a meeting on the National Front, a debate with the Liberals and lit sold in Guildford.

W. YORKS PR Members were widespread, but several successful public meetings, with help from the propaganda cttee.

INSTRUCTED RESOLUTIONS

1(a) MID HERTS BR: CONFERENCE AGENDA: "DELETE 'ARRANGEMENT OF ORDER IN WHICH AGENDA ITEMS ARE TO BE TAKEN', AND SUBSTITUTE 'ACCEPTANCE OF STANDING ORDER OF BUSINESS'. THE STANDING ORDER OF BUSINESS TO BE:
 SESSION I FRIDAY AM AFTER ELECTION OF CONFERENCE OFFICIALS:
 PARTY ORGANISATION, MEMBERSHIP, AMENDMENTS TO RULES.
 SESSION II FRIDAY PM. PROPAGANDA, PUBLICITY, ELECTORAL ACTIVITY.
 SESSION III SATURDAY PM. LIT PRODUCTION AND SALES.
 SESSION IV SUNDAY AM. PARTY OFFICERS REPORTS AND FINANCE.
 SESSION V SUNDAY PM. POLICY STATEMENTS, ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, A.O.B..
 CONDUCT OF BUSINESS:

(i) THERE WILL BE A GENERAL DISCUSSION RANGING OVER THE WHOLE AREA OF THE EC REPORT TO BE COVERED IN THAT SESSION.

(ii) OPENERS WILL SPEAK ONLY TO THEIR DIRECTED RESOLUTION OR AMENDMENT.

(iii) PARTICIPANTS IN DISCUSSION WILL BE EXPECTED TO SPEAK TO ALL RESOLUTIONS.

(iv) OPENERS, WITH RESPECT TO THE VARIOUS RESOLUTIONS, MAY SPEAK TWICE TO CONTRIBUTE TO DISCUSSION OTHER THAN THEIR OWN RESOLUTION ONLY IF THE BRANCH HAS NO OTHER DELEGATE SITTING.

(v) DISCUSSION WILL BE CLOSED WHEN OPENERS WIND UP BY REPLYING TO THE DISCUSSION APPROPRIATE TO THEIR RESOLUTIONS

(vi) FLOOR RESOLUTIONS, OTHER THAN THOSE REFERRED TO IN THE STANDING ORDERS, CAN ONLY BE MOVED AFTER GENERAL DISCUSSION AND VOTING ON DIRECTED RESOLUTIONS HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

(vii) THE CHAIRMAN, WITH CONFERENCE PERMISSION OR DIRECTION, HAS POWER TO EXTEND DISCUSSION EARLIER THAN PROVIDED FOR IN THE AGENDA, IF COMPLETION OF THE PREVIOUS SESSION PERMITS.

(viii) CHANGES OF ORDER IN THE AGENDA, OR DISCUSSION OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED ON A MOTION OF URGENCY WHICH CAN BE MOVED AT ANY TIME.

(ix) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION MAY BE CONSIDERED AT THE APPROPRIATE SESSION."

Lost 6-32.

1(b) MID HERTS BR: "THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BE INSTRUCTED TO SET UP AN AD-HOC CTTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE EC STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION, INCLUDING ITS SUB-COMMITTEES."

Lost 16-23.

AMENDMENT (BOLTON BR): "Insert 'ITS ELECTION' AFTER 'EC' ON LINE 2."

Lost 11-28

1(c) SWANSEA BR: "THAT THIS CONFERENCE INSTRUCTS THE CENTRAL ORGANISER TOGETHER WITH THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND ANY OTHER PARTY OFFICERS HE MAY CONSIDER ADVISABLE TO INVESTIGATE WAYS AND MEANS TO REORGANISE PARTY ADMINISTRATION AND PLACE SUCH FINDINGS BEFORE BRANCHES FOR CONSIDERATIONS, AND ENDORSEMENT AT THE NEXT DELEGATE MEETING OR ANNUAL CONFERENCE."

Lost 9-32.

Differing views were expressed over whether the Party needed to consider having a new administrative structure, and whether problems which had arisen in the last few years were the result of present arrangements.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH AT 1.30 AND RECOMMENCED AT 2.30.

INSTRUCTED RESN 1(d) (HARINGEY BR): "THIS CONFERENCE ENDORSES THE 1975 CONFERENCE FLOOR RESOLUTION THAT ALL BRANCH RESOLUTIONS SENT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BE PRODUCED IN FULL IN THE EC MINUTES, BUT THAT BRANCH SECRETARIES' LETTERS MAY BE PUBLISHED IN THE FORM OF A PRECIS IN THE EC MINUTES AND THAT BRANCH RESOLUTIONS BE SUPPORTED BY THE VOTING FOR AND AGAINST AND THE NUMBER OF BRANCH MEMBERS PRESENT."

Carried 23-13.

FLOOR RESN (Donnelly, Glasgow and Daleish, Oxford): "THIS CONFERENCE INSTRUCTS THE CHAIRMAN TO DEAL WITH RESOLUTIONS AS A PRIORITY, AND LEAVE ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION TO THE END."

Lost 5-24.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 1d (HARINGEY BR): THE DESIRABILITY OF REORGANISING EC BUSINESS ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: IN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE TO MEET WEEKLY AND DEAL WITH LESS IMPORTANT MATTER; AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (POSSIBLY COMPOSED OF DELEGATES FROM BRANCHES) TO MEET MONTHLY AND DEAL WITH IMPORTANT MATTERS, WHICH WOULD BE REFERRED TO IT BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE."

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 1(f) (HARINGEY BRANCH): "THE CONDUCT OF THE EC AND ITS MEMBERS IN RELATIONSHIP TO ITS SUB-COMMITTEES AND TO BRANCHES AND MEMBERS."

The Branch summarised the proposals they had brought to the previous ADM. Delegates questioned whether it was possible to draw a line between important and less important matters, and whether continuity could be preserved under the suggested arrangement.

INSTRUCTED RESN 1(e) (SWANSEA BR): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE EXPRESSES DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE 1977 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN THAT BY ASSUMING A MEMBER TO BE GUILTY OF ACTION DETRIMENTAL TO THE PARTY THE EC FAILED TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 33."

Carried 24-16.

Delegates thought it was not up to the EC to interpret Rule 33 as they wished. It was pointed out that it had been previous practice to use this form of words without charging.

INSTRUCTED RESN 1(f) (REDBRIDGE BR): "THIS CONFERENCE CONDEMNS THE ACTION OF CDE L.E. WEIDBERG IN THAT HE WROTE TO A LARGE NUMBER OF MEMBERS WITH THE INTENTION OF INFLUENCING THE RESULT OF THE BALLOT FOR THE 1978 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE."

Lost 13-27.

ADDENDUM (SW LONDON BR): "...AND IN VIEW OF THE CONSPIRATORIAL NATURE OF THIS MEMBER'S ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTY DEMOCRACY THIS CONFERENCE INSTRUCTS THE EC TO CHARGE HIM UNDER RULE 33."

Lost 7-34.

AMENDMENT (CAMDEN BRANCH): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE DEPRECATES THE ACTION OF CDE L.E. WEIDBERG IN THAT HE CIRCULATED THE PARTY WITH AN ABUSIVE LETTER MAKING ALLEGATIONS AIMING TO CREATE ILL-FEELING AGAINST CERTAIN CANDIDATES IN THE 1978 ELECTION AND THAT HE OBTAINED MEMBERS' NAMES AND ADDRESSES FOR THIS PURPOSE."

Lost 13-27.

There was a very lengthy discussion, ranging over the obtaining of members' names and addresses, the question whether there was a group which was trying to change the Party's case, whether some means should be given for EC candidates to make themselves known to the Party and the nature of Cde L.E. Weidberg's circular letter.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 6-00PM.

SATURDAY

PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AT 1-55pm.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS were received from Cde Hart (South Africa), Cde Valentino (Paris) and the Socialist Party of New Zealand. The Chair reported a donation of \$100 from the World Socialist Party of the USA, for the special fund.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 1(b) (EDINBURGH BR): "IS THERE A CASE FOR AGREEING A MONTHLY QUOTA OF SS TO BE SOLD BY EACH MEMBER AND THAT THOSE WHO FAIL TO DO SO SHALL HAVE THEIR VOTING RIGHTS WITHDRAWN AT CONFERENCE AND DELEGATE MEETINGS?"

Several delegates thought the Party was in a rut with regard to lit selling, but there was a feeling that direct pressure of the kind suggested might be counter-productive or undemocratic. It was a question of getting inactive Party members to do something. It was thought more lit could be sold at Hyde Park, where the efforts of the late Cde Sammy Highams were sadly missed.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 1(a) (REDBRIDGE BR): "THE SECURITY OF THE BALLOT IN FUTURE PARTY POLLS".

The Br made no suggestion of irregularity at the last poll, but there was a brief discussion of whether any further precautions need to be taken in future. The

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Motion "Next Business" was carried 27-4.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 1(c) (HAMPSTEAD BR): "WOULD IT BE PRACTICAL AND BENEFICIAL TO THE PARTY FOR EACH MEMBER TO DETERMINE HIS/HER OWN RATE OF DUES?"

Very brief discussion.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 1(a) (GLASGOW BR): "THE MISUSE OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS BY EC MEMBERS."

Short discussion of EC members raising points as a matter of urgency, with consequent delay to other Party business.

INSTRUCTED RESN 2(c) (SWANSEA BR): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE CONSIDERS THAT THE PROPAGANDA CTTEE IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO SUBMIT TO THE EC NAMES OF PARTY SPEAKERS IT APPOINTS EXCEPT WHEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 17, SUCH SPEAKERS ARE TO REPRESENT THE PARTY IN DEBATE."

AMENDMENT (CAMDEN BR): "THIS CONFERENCE CONSIDERS THAT AS THE PROPAGANDA CTTEE IS A SUB-CTTEE OF THE EC ALL ITS WORK, INCLUDING THE APPOINTMENT OF SPEAKERS, SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE SUPERVISION OF THE EC IN LINE WITH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE ADOPTED FOR THE DURATION OF ITS APPOINTMENT." Carried 30-11.

SUB RES CARRIED 30-11.

MOTION (Bennett, Haringey Br & Moss, Swansea Br) "That on a Vote of Direction the Chair be directed to rule the amendment out of order."

Lost 5-25.

The Haringey delegate reported that he was under Br instruction to move the vote of direction. There was discussion of the previous year's difference between the Prop Cttee and the EC, and argument that a check must be kept on all sub-cttees so that the Party was aware of what they were doing.

INSTRUCTED RESN 3(h) (PEPPERIDGE BR): "THIS CONFERENCE CONDEMNS THE ACTION OF CDE CHESHAM, CENTRAL ORGANISER, IN THAT HE SENT LETTERS TO ALL BRANCHES AND GROUPS, THESE LETTERS BEING DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO INFLUENCE THE BALLOT FOR THE 1978 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND IN SO DOING THIS HE STEPPED OUTSIDE HIS PROVINCE AS CENTRAL ORGANISER."

Lost 15-27.

ADDENDUM (SW LONDON BR): "...AND IN VIEW OF THE CONSPIRATORIAL NATURE OF THIS MEMBER'S ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTY DEMOCRACY THIS CONFERENCE INSTRUCTS THE EC TO CHARGE HIM UNDER RULE 33." Lost 9-32.

Very lengthy discussion over whether the Central Organiser had been involved in a conspiratorial campaign, with Cde L. Weidberg, the question of his having tape recorded a Redbridge Br meeting, and the importance of a Central Organiser not allying himself with any particular group of members.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 5.45 PM.

SUNDAY

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS RECOMMENCED AT 10.50 AM.

EC REPORT

Ers, Membership and Organisation (No discussion).

Book Dept: (No discussion).

Central Br Sec: (No discussion).

Education Organiser: One delegate expressed a preference for the normal type of class rather than a seminar.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 4 (HARINGEY BR): PARTY EDUCATION.

In reply to a question a member of the education cttee said they had not formulated plans for the year. They would listen to Party discussion and then plan. The Gen Sec reported that the Party syllabus was under revision by the Education Organiser in liaison with the Education Cttee.

FLOOR RESN (Lawrence, West London & Ambridge, Swansea): "THIS CONFERENCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE EC PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AMENITIES FOR MEMBERS OUTSIDE LONDON." Carried 16-0.

FLOOR RESN (Robinson and Westgate, Hampstead): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE RECOMMENDS BRANCHES PUTTING FORWARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION ON THE AGENDA EITHER TO DISTRIBUTE A CIRCULAR ON THE SUBJECT OR MAKE THE ITEM SUFFICIENTLY DETAILED TO ENABLE BRANCHES TO DISCUSS IT PRIOR TO CONFERENCE." Carried 9-0.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 2 (REDBRIDGE BR): "THE FALLACIES OF THE PROPAGANDA SURVEY REPORT."

Brief discussion of the survey report and the members who produced it.

A MOTION (Judd, Lewisham and Lawrence, West London) "Next Business" was carried 17-8.

REQUEST FOR URGENCY RE LAMBETH BY-ELECTION

The Gen Sec read out a resolution carried by the EC at its previous meeting: "The Gen Sec be instructed, on behalf of the EC, to seek urgency from Conference

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concerning the following: A by-election is due shortly in South Lambeth, SW London Br do not wish to contest and, in spite of an EC request to reconsider, maintain their position. This is the constituency in which HO is situated and where considerable work was done, mainly by members of SW London Br, during the GLC election. Therefore the EC feels strongly that we should contest, even though it will be necessary to do so on a limited budget. Definite undertakings to help from 22/29 members of other London Branches have been received. The EC request guidance from Delegates on whether or not the Party feels we should contest this by-election."

A MOTION (Kerr, SW London Br and T.D'Arcy, Westminster) "Next Business" was lost 6-15. A MOTION (Moss, Swansea and T.D'Arcy, Westminster) "That consideration be deferred until instructed resns have been dealt with." was carried 17-10.

INSTRUCTED RESN 4(A) (WESTMINSTER BR): "THIS CONFERENCE ENDORSES ITEMS 1, 11 and 12 OF THE CAMDEN BRANCH CIRCULAR OF 15 SEPT 1977 AS BEING A STATEMENT OF THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO DEMOCRACY."

AMENDMENT (WESTMINSTER): "DELETE THE FULL STOP AT THE END OF THE RESOLUTION AND ADD 'VIZ: 1. THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN DISCUSSION ABOUT THE USEFULNESS TO A SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE KIND OF PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM THAT EXISTS IN THE COUNTRY AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES: THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SYSTEM: AND THE CONDITIONS GOVERNING ITS CREATION AND CONTINUANCE. IT IS ACCEPTED IN BRITAIN THAT SYSTEM WAS SET UP BY THE CAPITALIST CLASS IN THEIR OWN INTEREST: INCLUDING THEIR NEED TO 'DRAG' THE WORKING CLASS 'INTO THE POLITICAL AREA' (COMMUNIST MANIFESTO). THE CHIEF INITIATIVE CAME FROM THE CAPITALIST CLASS. ALREADY IN THE 1780's THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION WERE BOTH PREPARING BILLS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF UNIVERSAL ADULT MALE SUFFRAGE. IT WAS THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN 1789 AND CONSEQUENT WIDESPREAD FEAR AMONG THE CAPITALISTS OF SIMILAR REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY THAT POSTPONED ELECTORAL REFORM FOR DECADES. EXPERIENCE IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES HAS SHOWN THAT THE 'PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM' IS LIABLE TO BE CURTAILED OR EVEN WITHDRAWN WHEN THERE IS EXTENSIVE DISORDER, INCLUDING THAT CREATED BY MINORITY ATTEMPTS AT ARMED REVOLT. WHILE THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS ARE NOT SOCIALIST THERE IS NOW WAY IN WHICH WE CAN PREVENT THEM FROM SUPPORTING ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AS HAPPENED IN GERMANY IN THE 1930's.

11. WHILE THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT HAS LITTLE BACKING AMONG THE WORKERS THERE IS LITTLE WE CAN DO BUT ACCEPT OR SEEK TO EVADE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE AUTHORITIES. AS THE NUMBERS INCREASE THE SITUATION WILL BE CORRESPONDINGLY ALTERED, EITHER BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES WILL PROCEED WITH MORE CAUTION OR BECAUSE (LIKE THE TRADE UNIONS) WE SHALL BE BETTER ABLE TO RESIST, AND AT SOME STAGE SOCIALISTS WILL BE ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT.

12. OUR PROPAGANDA SHOULD ALWAYS STRESS THAT SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY ARE INSEPARABLE; THAT THERE IS NO WAY TO SOCIALISM EXCEPT THROUGH THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION OF A SOCIALIST MAJORITY; AND THAT IT MUST PROCEED THROUGH DEMOCRATICALLY GAINING CONTROL OF THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE ARMED FORCES. IN COUNTRIES WHERE THE 'PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM' DOES NOT YET EXIST, OR WHERE IT IS CURTAILED OR SUSPENDED, SOCIALISTS CAN ONLY USE WHATEVER RESTRICTED OPPORTUNITIES THERE ARE TO PROPAGATE SOCIALISM AND ITS INSEPARABLE LINK WITH DEMOCRATIC METHODS. THEY SHOULD DO THIS INDEPENDENTLY AND IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES CONFUSE THE ISSUE BY ASSOCIATING WITH NON-SOCIALISTS."

Carried 19-18.

AMENDMENT (CAMDEN BR): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE ENDORSES CAMDEN BRANCH'S STATEMENT ON DEMOCRACY OF 15 SEPT 1977 AS BEING AN HISTORICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO DEMOCRACY."

Lost 14-21.

U-11: Lost 17-18.

It was agreed to combine discussion with ITEM FOR DISCUSSION 5(a) (WESTMINSTER BR) : "THE CAMDEN BR STATEMENT ON DEMOCRACY". A very long discussion, with different views expressed on how far the establishing of political rights was due to the capitalist class.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 1-35 AND RECOMMENCED AT 2.40pm.

It was Agreed that Cde P. George be co-opted onto the Standing Orders Cttee for the afternoon session.

INSTRUCTED RESN 4(b) (HAMPSTEAD BR): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE REAFFIRMS THE PARTY'S POSITION ON DEMOCRATIC AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS AS STATED IN 'QUESTIONS OF THE DAY' (CHAPTER ON LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES) AND 'RUSSIA SINCE 1917' (CHAPTER - DEMOCRACY IN RUSSIA) AND SPECIFICALLY REPUDIATES THE ARTICLE 'RUSSIANS AND THEIR RIGHTS' July 1977 SS."

AMENDMENT (CAMDEN BR): "DELETE ALL AFTER THE WORDS '(CHAPTER- DEMOCRACY IN RUSSIA)'".

CARRIED 27-8.

SUB-RES CARRIED 25-2.

A shorter discussion, concerning the question of rights.

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INSTRUCTED RESN 4(C) (GLASGOW BR): "THIS CONFERENCE REAFFIRMS THE VIEW THAT A MAJORITY IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH SOCIALISM, NOT A 'GREAT', 'VAST', 'OVERWHELMING' OR 'IMMENSE' MAJORITY."

AMENDMENT (CAMDEN BR): "THIS CONFERENCE REAFFIRMS THAT 'ONLY A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED SOCIALIST MAJORITY CAN INTRODUCE SOCIALISM AFTER THE CAPTURE OF THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT' (STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE APPROVED BY 1965 CONFERENCE) AND FURTHER HOLDS THAT THIS PRESUPPOSES THAT 'THE OVERWHELMING MASS OF THE PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE OR FALL INTO LINE WITH THE PROCESS OF REORGANISATION' (STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE SUBMITTED TO 1977 CONFERENCE)."

Carried 26-15.

SUB RES Carried 24-15.

Brief discussion, centering on whether there was any point in taking up a position which would be decided by the working class at the appropriate time.

It was agreed by the delegates to thank Cde Joe Bell for his work for the Canteen Cttee during the Conference.

INSTRUCTED RESN 4(d) (GLASGOW BR): "THIS CONFERENCE ENDORSES THE VIEW EXPRESSED IN THE SS IN OCT 1954 VIZ. 'THIS VALUE IS REALLY A SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP; A RELATION BETWEEN PEOPLE, BETWEEN ONE MAN'S LABOUR AND THAT OF ANOTHER; BUT THIS SOCIAL RELATION BETWEEN THE LABOUR OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE IS EXPRESSED AS A RELATION BETWEEN THE COMMODITIES THEY HAVE PRODUCED; IT IS EXPRESSED WHEN THE LATTER APPEAR ON THE MARKET FOR SALE.'"

AMENDMENT (GLASGOW BR): "ON LINE ONE OF THE STATEMENT DELETE THE WORDS 'THIS' AND 'RELATIONSHIP' AND INSERT THE WORDS 'THUS' AND 'RELATION' AS PER SS OCT 1954."

It was agreed to incorporate the Amendment to the Resn.

RESN Carried 22-5.

Discussion was fairly technical, turning on whether the extract gave an acceptable statement of the labour theory of value.

INSTRUCTED RESN 4(e) (GLASGOW BR): "THIS CONFERENCE REAFFIRMS THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO VIOLENCE, VIZ. 'THAT ONLY A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED SOCIALIST MAJORITY CAN INTRODUCE SOCIALISM AFTER THE CAPTURE OF THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT; VIOLENCE WILL ONLY BE USED IN THE EVENT OF A RECALCITRANT MINORITY ATTEMPTING TO FORCIBLY OVERTHROW OR DISRUPT SOCIALISM.'"

AMENDMENT (CAMDEN BR): "THIS CONFERENCE ENDORSES THE COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE REQUESTED BY CONFERENCE 1976 AND SUBMITTED TO CONFERENCE 1977."

Carried 26-13.

SUB-RES Carried 26-13.

There was brief discussion of the Statement referred to, and its adequacy.

LAMBETH BY-ELECTION

FLOOR RESN (Brown, Westminster and McNeeney, Mid-Herts): "THAT THIS CONFERENCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE EC INSTRUCTS THE PARLIAMENTARY CTTEE TO ORGANISE AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN AT THE FORTHCOMING LAMBETH CENTRAL BY-ELECTION."

Carried 18-4.

Questions were raised about the advisability of contesting if the local Branch had refused to contest. Some delegates said their Branches would give support in the event of contesting. Partt Cttee gave a verbal report on the situation and the Gen Sec read out a letter from SW London Br stating their position.

EC REPORT (Cont'd)

Forms A Scrutiny Cttee (No discussion)

Auditors It was agreed to accept the report as a correct factual statement.

Lit Sec Some delegates raised doubts about the usefulness of the contract for SS distribution with PDC. The Gen Sec pointed out that a report on the working of the contract was contained in the minutes of the 4th Mtg, 75th EC.

International Sec (No discussion)

Overseas Contours Sec (No discussion)

New Pamphlets Cttee In reply to a question a member of the Cttee reported that a new pamphlet on Russia would be written, but this had been put back because a pamphlet on Trade Unions was under way.

Party Funds Organisers In reply to a question it was reported that app £300 was being paid into the monthly guarantee fund. This represented about 50% of the original objective, and had come from app One-fifth of the Party membership. 160 letters had been sent, with app 60 replies; and 70 phone calls with 50 effective replies.

Premises Cttee It was generally agreed by the delegates that the Cttee were to be thanked for their work at HO.

Publicity Cttee A member hoped there would be interest from the Party in the Cttee's work.

Review Journals Sec (No discussion)

SSPC Differing views were taken about the number of complaints about articles and whether they were warranted, and the point was also raised of personal

members handbook
property
FLOOR RESN
SSPC F...

... on members of the committee. In reply to a question it was stated that a writer's handbook had been produced by a member of the Cttee at his own expense and was his property.

FLOOR RESN (G.Kerr, Redbridge and A.Kerr, SW London): "THIS CONFERENCE THANKS THE 1977 SSPC FOR ITS CONSISTENT HIGH STANDARD OF PRODUCTION UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES." ADDENDUM (Garnham, SW London Br and M.Barltrap, Camden) "...AND THAT THE SSPC BE CONGRATULATED FOR THE WORK THAT THEY HAVE DONE IN YEARS PREVIOUS TO 1977."

Carried 11-9.

ADDED RESN Lost 11-12.

FLOOR RESN (Fleming, Glasgow and Craig, Edinburgh): "THAT THE 1977 SSPC BE THANKED FOR THEIR EFFORTS DURING THEIR TERM OF OFFICE."

Carried 21-0.

Tapes Cttee In reply to a query it was stated that during the last months of the year the Cttee had had only one member and this was still the case. The Cttee would be glad to make tapes of theoretical aspects of the Party's case when these were forthcoming in lectures.

Central Organiser (No discussion)

Master Form C (No discussion)

FLOOR RESN (Kerr, Redbridge & Knox, Edinburgh) "That the EC's report to Conference be adopted." Agreed,

FLOOR RESN (re Ad Hoc Cttee's report on Party Finance) (Ross & T.D'Arcy, Westminster): "BRANCHES BE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE REPORT OF THE AD-HOC CTTEE AND THE EC RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FINANCIAL STATE OF THE PARTY AND THE EC BE REQUESTED TO CALL A SPECIAL PARTY MEETING AT HO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." Agreed.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 6-30pm.

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Conf recommends the EC to put surplus monies in a spec account deposit acct at their own discretion."

Floor Resn: "This Conf recommends that the EC ...
sion of the 75th anniversary ... Carried 15-2